

Steven Dunne

Acts 16:6-15

“Closed and Open Doors”

Acts 16:6–15 ESV

And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

2 Corinthians 4:8 ESV

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair;

Philippians 1:12 ESV

I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel,

Psalms 51:12 ESV

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Philippians 4:14–20 ESV

Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20–21 ESV

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Life Group Discussion Questions:

- 1. What did God say to you during our Sunday gathering?**
- 2. When have you experienced a "closed door" from God that was confusing or disappointing at the time? Looking back now, how do you see God's hand in redirecting you?**
- 3. Paul and his team had good plans and right motives, yet God still said "no." How does this challenge or encourage you when thinking about your own unanswered prayers or unmet expectations?**
- 4. The sermon talked about how disappointment can either harden us or deepen our dependence on God. Which way do you tend to lean when life doesn't go as planned, and what helps you choose dependence over despair?**
- 5. Take some time to "trace the unseen hand of God" in your salvation story. What had to happen—people, places, circumstances—for you to hear and receive the gospel? Share parts of your story with your Life Group.**
- 6. How can your Life Group help you this week in living out the truths of this text?**